

Election Administration Subgroup

Vote Indiana Team

March 7, 2003

Subgroup members present: Christa Adkins, Karen Kay Leonard (proxy for Tami Barreto), Pam Finlayson, Mike Kiefer, Zach Main, Kristi Robertson, Todd Rokita and Joe Ryan. Facilitator: Sarah Taylor.

Others present: Dee Ann Hart (Vote Indiana Team), Julia Vaughn (Count Us In)

Subgroup members introduced themselves and gave a status report of what their knowledge base was concerning election administration.

Kristi Robertson gave an overview of Indiana's law on provisional ballots to be used first in the 2004 election. Kristi also described the certificate of error process currently used by all counties. HAVA requires follow up on whether or not the vote counted and where the voter is properly registered via a free access system (i.e. Web or phone based). Issues surrounding provisional balloting include: who will administer the free access system? Should the onus be placed on the voter or the county for follow up? What steps should be taken for verification of the qualification of a provisional voter? How to avoid the chronic or perpetual provisional voter? Secretary Rokita suggested we set a framework for the verification process so there is consistency throughout the state. Dee Ann Hart reminded members that follow up by postcard would not work for voters with visual impairments.

The subgroup decided to skip the first 3 bullet points on the Task Lists for Subgroups document for today's discussion.

Under bullet point 4, Kristi described briefly the grievance process under the National Voter Registration Act. Grievances under HAVA must have a hearing, follow up and remedy process. Col. Ryan suggested that Indiana would want to audit this process to be fully informed before the feds receive the information. He suggested that we would be able to learn from the grievances and make appropriate changes to the overall electoral process. Secretary Rokita spoke about a toll free telephone number that would also include election fraud complaints. He stressed that there must be a back end to the process so we can actually act on the calls received.

The group decided to skip bullet point 5 pertaining to performance measures. The status quo discussion under bullet point 6 was mentioned throughout the meeting as needed. The “maintenance of effort” discussion under bullet point 7 will be heard in the future.

Under bullet point 8, Todd described that Indiana is ahead of HAVA and had just passed the Indiana Voters’ Bill of Rights the day before at the Indiana Election Commission. It passed with unanimous bipartisan support. He is making arrangements to get the Voters’ Bill of Rights into every Indiana precinct, although that is not required until 2004. Dee Ann reminded the members that providing this document in other alternative formats is very important to the visually impaired community. She said the web would be a good place especially if candidates and parties were to place it on their websites. She also mentioned working with the radio stations to announce it. **Kristi will provide a copy of the Voters’ Bill of Rights along with a comparison to HAVA’s requirements.**

Bullet point 9 describes toll-free telephone hotlines for voting fraud and voting rights violation reports. Members again expressed their concern that grievances and fraud complaints have a simple process for voters to initiate. Todd said there is no current statewide process in place. Discussion was held about what steps a county take upon receiving a complaint. It varies from county to county and may also depend on the follow up of the local prosecutor.

Bullet point 10 about provisional ballots was discussed earlier.

Bullet point 11 concerning pollworker recruitment may be shared with the Training and Education subgroup. Todd suggested partnerships with non-partisan groups like the League of Women Voters. **Sarah Taylor will provide another state’s document on college pollworker recruitment.** Dee Ann hopes more visually impaired voters will be asked to be pollworkers.

Under bullet point 12, “Access to automated information” regarding a voter’s registration status and polling place, Pam Finlayson suggested we visit Michigan’s website which also includes instructions about how to use the voting system. **The web address is <https://www.sospublius.org/publiussearch/>.**

Bullet point 13 pertaining to first time mail-in registrants is very different than Indiana’s current law. Members discussed how do you “flag” these individuals and the confusion that could exist when just certain voters are asked for ID. It was suggested that we partner with Training and Education to better inform voters about this change.

Next meeting’s agenda will include finishing the status quo discussion on bullet points 14, 15 and 16. Review of documents to be supplied. Further discussion on bullet points 4 (Grievance procedure), 10 (Provisional ballots) and 13 (documentation for first-time mail-in registrants) is scheduled.

Public Comment:

Julia Vaughn, Count Us In, commented that the onus for follow up on provisional ballots should be on the county not the voter. It appears it will be costly on the front end because of the opportunity to have a “rash” of these ballots. She also thinks the state should place a “maintenance of effort” requirement on the counties. Julia hopes there will be a partnership extended between election administrators and the community with disabilities. She stated that two thirds of Indiana’s disabled are unemployed. These individuals should be recruited as pollworkers. This partnership would also ensure that all polling places are accessible. Julia also discussed the potential loophole in the distinction between hand delivered registrations on mail-in forms and those sent through the mail for purposes of having to provide ID. **Secretary Rokita will have the legislative history reviewed on this potential scenario.**

The next meeting will be March 14, 2003 at 1:00 p.m.